is done once in six years and the turn for re-metalling it will come next year. Some portions have been taken up earlier owing to heavy traffic. The other portion will not be overlooked and will be taken up next year, when its turn comes.

With regard to the Western Outlet road, two estimates were submitted by the Chief Engineer to Government some time ago. I have not yet sanctioned these estimates, because I want to satisfy myself about this road. I am likely to visit it this month or the next, and I shall then decide whether we should spend more money on it, for there is some difference of opinion in regard to the utility of this road and the possibility of maintaining it. I know we have already spent over 9 lakhs of rupees for making the road cartable, and it will be the aim of Government to improve the road and keep it fit, if at all it is possible to do so.

The question of roads in the Planting District is a difficult one. Government are aware of the importance of improving the existing roads and of making fresh roads in the District. They will do good to both the Government and to the people. Government are thankful to the planters for the roads they have made so far at their own cost, and for handing them over to Government free of cost and also for making continuation roads. The improvement of communications in the Planting District involves not only more money but also an improvement in administration. The taluks of Devicolam and Peermade are so far away from the headquarters of responsible P. W. D. officers that these officers are handicapped to a certain extent, and the question of having a responsible local officer who can look to the local needs promptly and consult local opinion as to what is important and what is unimportant is engaging the attention of Government. Added to this, I should like to gain more personal experience of the condition of affairs in that part of the country and also to confer with the planters and people who have got interests at stake and, then, with the help of the Chief Engineer and with the help of the local non-official public, I should like to come to some decision in regard to the policy to be pursued. I shall do this as early as possible.

VI. PUBLIC HEALTH.

Municipal Councils and Medical Relief.

(1) Municipal Councils.

81. Grievances of the public owing to heavy taxation in the Nagercoil Municipality.

Mr. P. Kesava Perumal (Member, Nominated) said that the scavenging fees and house tax imposed by the municipality were too heavy to be borne by the people. Though it was an established fact that municipal taxes were intended to be utilised towards securing health and sanitation, it was also necessary to ascertain whether the people were in a position to pay the heavy taxes imposed on them. The duty of the Municipality and the Government consisted not in imposing heavy taxes on the people but taxing them lightly and conferring proportionate benefits on them. The Nagercoil Municipality failed to do this, and this was evidenced by the large number of notices served and attachments made and the innumerable representations of the people protesting against the imposition. The scavenging fees and house tax now imposed were too heavy on the people. The Member, therefore, requested that reasonable reductions be made in the rates of taxes levied by the Municipality in proportion to the capacity of the people to pay and the system rendered feasible and easily workable. One point to be considered was, he said, to see if the citizens derived benefits commensurate with the taxes paid by them. The large surplus now in the hands of the Municipality was itself a sure indication of the heaviness of the taxation and the disproportionate use made of it in securing the comfort and convenience of the people. The amount budgetted for the new Municipal Office building was likely to be heavily exceeded when it came to completion. It was indeed a great grievance, if that large surplus wrung from the poor people was left to be used for purposes other than securing their comfort and convenience. In view of these facts, the Member prayed for orders to the Municipality to remove the complaints above set forth.

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Dewan's reply.—Your complaint is against the Municipality and not against the Government. The Municipality levies taxes under the Municipal Regulation. According to that Regulation the Council passes a resolution proposing the levy of tax at a certain rate. The resolution is published and objections heard ; and finally, the imposition of the tax is decided. You should therefore ventilate your views before the Nagercoil Municipal Council.

82. Neyyattinkara Municipality and its needs.

Mr. N. Krishna Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Neyyattinkara) represented that the present Municipal Regulation should not be wholly applicable to places like Neyyattinkara, where the congested portions were comparatively small. The majority of the places in the town were mere country places away from the main road and they received no benefit from municipal activities. As such the Municipal Regulation should not be applied there. He proposed that municipalities should be divided into two groups, *viz.*, major and minor municipalities, and that there should not be any difference between the minor municipalities in which the Neyyattinkara Municipality should be included and the old Town Improvement Committees. Minor municipalities might, he said, be declared major as they grew in importance and extent. The Member brought forward certain suggestions for the better administration of the Neyyattinkara Municipality. Firstly, a readjustment of the limits of the Municipality was necessary. It was absolutely necessary to include the Aralumudu market within Neyyattinkara municipal limits, as it was only less than a mile away from the town; and Balaramapurom also should be brought within municipal limits.

Next, he dealt with the question of toll gates. He remarked that between Trivandrum and Nagercoil there were four municipalities and that it would be too burdensome for the people, if there were to be toll gates at all those places. To avoid the difficulty he proposed that no municipality need have any revenue under that head. He then represented that the want of necessary funds made it impossible for his municipality to undertake any big work. There were no big markets and the income derivable from house-tax and professional tax would be nominal. To raise house-tax above $2\frac{1}{2}$% on the annual rental value was against the wishes of the people. Owing to its poor financial condition, the municipality could not undertake educational responsibility nor could they take up road maintenance unless the whole funds were transferred from the P. W. D. He said that a new source of income could be resorted to by converting the local private markets into public markets and bringing them under municipal management. He requested that this might be done.

Lastly, he made an earnest request for an increase in the amount of Government grant. The present grant of Rs. 500 was too small ; if the municipality should continue, the Government grant should be raised and fixed at Rs. 1,500.

Dewan's reply.—In regard to the general question that has been raised, *viz.*, the division of the municipalities into major and minor municipalities, it is a matter for legislation. But I may point out that the Municipal Regulation is very elastic and is so drafted as to meet the needs of big towns where more taxes can be levied and higher rates of taxation adopted as well as small towns which are more rural in character. The question of tolls is receiving the attention of Government. As regards the extension of the municipal limits, if, as the Member says, the Municipal Council has forwarded its resolutions to Government, the question will be considered by Government. As for the conversion of private markets into public markets, I am not clear how it can be brought about except by acquiring private markets or taking lands on lease. Even in regard to that, definite proposals should come from the municipality. The other suggestions will be considered.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 P. M.

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